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« Try telling Ray Comfort that

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/try-telling-ray-comfort-that/>)

The Fermi paradox is only interesting for the assumption exposes (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/the-fermi-paradox-is-only-interesting-for-the-assumptions-it-exposes>)

Watching the legal sausage getting made

You may know that Freethoughtblogs, The Orbit, and Skepticon have taken on a lawyer to defend us against a lawsuit for over two million dollars by Richard Carrier. Weirdly, this suit was filed in Ohio, where none of the targets live, and where most of the conflicts did not occur, and our lawyer's first tactic is to file for a change of venue. This is a public filing, so you can read it yourself (pdf) (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/files/2016/12/latestllfiling.pdf>).

<

Maybe this is your idea of entertainment.

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(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/11/27/friday-cephalopod-ever-have-one-of-those-days-where-you-have-a-tough-time-telling-where-your-food-ends-and-you-begin/>)

Friday Cephalopod: Ever have one of those days where you have a tough time telling where your food ends and you begin?

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/11/27/friday-cephalopod-ever-have-one-of-those-days-where-you-have-a-tough-time-telling-where-your-food-ends-and-you-begin/>)

In "Science"



(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2013/02/26/behold-the-hummonite/>)

Behold the Hummonite!

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2013/02/26/behold-the-hummonite/>)

In "Weirdness"

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2013/02/26/behold-the-hummonite/>)

The song is a little bit naughty, so you might not want to play it where non-nerds might hear it.

In "Entertainment"

**Affidavit
Exhibit U**

« Try telling Ray Comfort that

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/try-telling-ray-comfort-that/>)

The Fermi paradox is only interesting for the assumption exposes (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/the-fermi-paradox-is-only-interesting-for-the-assumptions-it-exposes>)

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The Atheist Experience
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(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/thathispanicatheist/>)

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(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/stderr/author/mraranum/>)

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(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/resist/2016/12/14/rally-in-new-york/>)

FREETHOUGHT RESISTANCE
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/resist/>) - Published by PZ Myers
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/resist/author/pharyngula/>)

• PZ Myers (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/author/pharyngula/>) 2 December 2016

■ Miscellaneous and Meta (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/category/misc/>)

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Comments

1.  birgerjohansson
2 December 2016 at 6:26 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052239>)

Is this one of those nuisance lawsuits where a bastard sues people hoping they will settle out of court to make t troll go away, or is this a deluded kook ?

Moar bad stuff.

Andrew Sachs, Manuel from Fawlty Towers, dies aged 86

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/01/andrew-sachs-dies-after-alzheimers-aged-86>

(<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/01/andrew-sachs-dies-after-alzheimers-aged-86>)

-I know, 2016 only looks bad because of statistical flukes, but FUUUCK !!!

2.  Ichthyic
2 December 2016 at 6:33 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052240>)

Neither. Richard was a big part of the blog system here and elsewhere for a long time.

more's the pity.

he's no grandstander like TFoot, nor a kook like Pivar.

He says he's doing this because he has to in order to clear his name.

I have no dog in this hunt, so happy to let the courts decide what's what, but even Carrier admits the core of all this was a mistake he made so....

3.  EigenSprocketUK
2 December 2016 at 6:48 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052244>)

Page 12:

Ohio is hardly known as the nerve center of polyamorous atheistic speaking and publishing.

It is now....

4.  slithey tove (twas brillig (stevem))
2 December 2016 at 7:08 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052250>)

Re Sachs:



5.  KG
2 December 2016 at 7:14 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052251>)

or is this a deluded kook ? – birgirjohansson

Yes, although one who was hosted at FtB for far too long. Not only a mythicist (the main form of deluded kookery popular among non-MRA atheists), but someone who thinks all historical methodology can be reduced to Bayes's theorem, and for some years thought he correct theoretical physicists about the relationship between quantum mechanics and relativity.

Zero Gravity Space Art, And You Can Be A Part!
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/affinity/2016/12/14/zero-gravity-space-art-and-you-can-be-a-part/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/affinity/2016/12/14/zero-gravity-space-art-and-you-can-be-a-part/)
Affinity (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/affinity>) - Published by Caine (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/affinity/author/caine>)

Is that in my job description?
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/is-that-in-my-job-description/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/is-that-in-my-job-description/)
Pharyngula (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula>) - Published by PZ Myers (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/author/pharyngula>)

THE PARADOX OF SCIENCE: The surprising success of science
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/singham/2016/12/14/the-paradox-of-science-the-surprising-success-of-science/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/singham/2016/12/14/the-paradox-of-science-the-surprising-success-of-science/)
Mario Singham (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/singham>) - Published by Mario Singham (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/singham/author/singham>)

Feeling Helpless
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/thoughtsofcrys/2016/12/14/feeling-helpless/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/thoughtsofcrys/2016/12/14/feeling-helpless/)
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Quoting Jordan Peterson is "muckraking" now
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/atg/2016/12/14/quoting-jordan-peterson-is-muckraking-now/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/atg/2016/12/14/quoting-jordan-peterson-is-muckraking-now/)
Against the Grain (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/atg>) - Published by Siobhan (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/atg/author/echamilton>)

As an atheist, what curse would you use...
 (Responses)
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/deviant/2016/12/14/as-an-atheist-what-curse-would-you-use-responses/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/deviant/2016/12/14/as-an-atheist-what-curse-would-you-use-responses/)
Small Town Deviant (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/deviant>) - Published by Cadyn (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/deviant/author/deviant>)

The Indian demonetisation fiasco
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/arun/2016/12/13/the-indian-demonetisation-fiasco/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/arun/2016/12/13/the-indian-demonetisation-fiasco/)
Nastik Deliberations (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/arun>) - Published by Arun (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/arun/author/arunmadhavan>)

To Build A Bridge Or Burn It?
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/bianymmeans/2016/12/13/to-build-a-bridge-or-burn-it/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/bianymmeans/2016/12/13/to-build-a-bridge-or-burn-it/)
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Does evolution have a purpose?
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/does-evolution-have-a-purpose/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/does-evolution-have-a-purpose/)

6.  Lofty
 2 December 2016 at 7:24 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052252>)
 Maybe he's trying to gain enough asshole cred to land a job with the Orange Trumpeter.
7.  themadtapper
 2 December 2016 at 8:52 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052254>)
 Out of curiosity, does anybody know if Ohio has a history of leaning in favor of plaintiffs in liable/slander/defamation cases? My gut tells me the choice of venue was probably strategic.
8.  Kongstad
 2 December 2016 at 9:02 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052257>)
 If anyone interested, Atheistically Speaking podcast had a lawyer on discussing this case:
<http://atheisticallyspeaking.com/as280-richard-carriers-lawsuit-andrew-torrez/>
[\(http://atheisticallyspeaking.com/as280-richard-carriers-lawsuit-andrew-torrez/\)](http://atheisticallyspeaking.com/as280-richard-carriers-lawsuit-andrew-torrez/)
 Interesting listen
9. Kyle Garrison (<https://plus.google.com/114570731718378413448>)
 2 December 2016 at 9:12 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052259>)
 @7 I think the reason is a bit less sinister than that. Carrier's last few posts before this ordeal were about his recent move to Ohio.
10.  PZ Myers (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula>)
 2 December 2016 at 9:15 am
[\(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052261>\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052261)
 Yeah, Ohio lacks any anti-SLAPP laws, while California has strong ones, and Minnesota and Missouri have some weak ones (although more potent than Ohio's). See **this map** (<http://www.anti-slapp.org/your-states-free-speech-protection/>).
11.  Holms
 2 December 2016 at 9:32 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052265>)
 KG, I have seen that disagreeing-with-physicists-about-physics thing before, but never managed to find it (or I have simply forgotten). Do you recall where it is?
12.  themadtapper
 2 December 2016 at 9:50 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052270>)
 @9 I didn't say his move to Ohio was strategic, only the choice of venue is. He very well could have been planning to move to Ohio before the lawsuit ever became an idea. But even after the move, a competent lawyer could have told him Ohio was not the right venue for the lawsuit and would almost surely be challenged. But with Ohio having no anti-SLAPP laws, as PZ just confirmed, they would have a strong motivation to give it a try anyway.
13.  joeschoefer
 2 December 2016 at 10:02 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052273>)

[16/12/14/does-evolution-have-a-purpose/](#)

I had no idea quantum computing was so kinky
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/i-had-no-idea-quantum-computing-was-so-kinky/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/i-had-no-idea-quantum-computing-was-so-kinky/)

If we're going to allow piano lessons, we must also allow penis-chopping
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/if-were-going-to-allow-piano-lessons-we-must-also-allow-penis-chopping/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/if-were-going-to-allow-piano-lessons-we-must-also-allow-penis-chopping/)

Even so-called "moderate" Republicans are unfeeling reptiles
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/even-so-called-moderate-republicans-are-unfeeling-reptiles/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/even-so-called-moderate-republicans-are-unfeeling-reptiles/)

Aren't you *ashamed* of your job?
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/arent-you-ashamed-of-your-job/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/arent-you-ashamed-of-your-job/)

An epistemological battering
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/an-epistemological-battering/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/an-epistemological-battering/)

Mary's Monday Metazoan: The reindeer are suffering
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/marys-monday-metazoan-the-reindeer-are-suffering/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/marys-monday-metazoan-the-reindeer-are-suffering/)

What a wonderful endorsement!
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/what-a-wonderful-endorsement/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/what-a-wonderful-endorsement/)

Keep your biological reductionism off us men, too
[\(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/keep-your-biological-reductionism-off-us-men-too/\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/12/keep-your-biological-reductionism-off-us-men-too/)

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Discuss: Racism in America

[\(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/07/racism-in-america-3/>\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/07/racism-in-america-3/)

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[\(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/05/art-4/>\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/05/art-4/)

Discuss: Through a feminist lens
[\(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/07/through-a-feminist-lens-4/>\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/07/through-a-feminist-lens-4/)

Discuss: Moments of Political Madness
[\(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/11/moments-of-political-madness-6/>\)](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/11/moments-of-political-madness-6/)

Holms: Carrier is a historian with an actual history degree, so I don't think you can say he's arguing outside of his field. He's written a couple books about his unorthodox views on whether Jesus existed, debates, and many blog posts. I haven't read the books, but I would occasionally read the blog posts when he blogged here, and I see now that he's still actively blogging at <http://www.richardcarrier.info> (<http://www.richardcarrier.info>).

14.  themadtapper

2 December 2016 at 10:32 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052281>)

@8 That's an excellent podcast. Really does a good job explaining the tort law involved. Also, after hearing the things he has to say about Ohio's defamation laws and standards, I'd say its almost certain that the Ohio venue was chosen strategically. One of the counts in his lawsuit isn't even recognized as valid in some states, but is recognized in Ohio.

15.  Siggy (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/atrivialknot>)

2 December 2016 at 10:58 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052287>)

I didn't know Carrier had moved to Ohio. This whole time, I had been imagining great tension at the Bay Area meetups between Richard Carrier and Greta Christina.

16.  Owlmirror

2 December 2016 at 11:04 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052288>)

@KG:

Not only a mythicist (the main form of deluded kookery popular among non-MRA atheists)

I'm unconvinced that mythicism is either deluded (as in, an actual false belief) or kookery (as in, obviously absurd or based on obviously garbage premises). Carrier has at least made the case that:

- (a) It's very odd that Paul of Tarsus, who supposedly lived not long after Jesus Christ was supposedly crucified, wrote nothing that invoked any miracles that Jesus performed (other than the resurrection itself) or teachings that Jesus taught.
- (b) The Gospels on the one hand seem to build on one another, and yet all too often contradict each other. There are also events in the Gospels that only make sense as allegories. It's therefore reasonable to reject them as having any reliability about an actual life of an actual person doing actual things.

There's more to the argument than that, of course, but I think that's more or less the basics.

There was something very odd going on with the beginnings of Christianity, and mythicism is not the oddest conclusion to come to given that weirdness.

Do you know of any reason to think that what Carrier points out about the writings of Paul or the Gospels is false?

17.  ahcuah (<http://ahcuah.wordpress.com/>)

2 December 2016 at 11:27 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052292>)

I'm impressed. One of the attorneys is noted First Amendment attorney Marc Randazza.



PZ Myers (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula>)

2 December 2016 at 11:43 am

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052298>)

Randazza is a hoot. We've had a couple of conference calls with him.

19.  Brian Pansky (<http://thread-of-fire.tumblr.com/myblogs>)

2 December 2016 at 11:46 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052300>)

@5, KG

Discuss: Music

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/08/music/>)

You presented no arguments that he's wrong.

Discuss: World Politics

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/08/world-politics/>)

Not only a mythicist (the main form of deluded kookery popular among non-MRA atheists),

Discuss: Interesting Stuff

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/11/interesting-stuff-5/>)

He actually debunks bad Mythicist memes that are popular. He's against the kooks. His book on the subject is peer reviewed. He admits Jesus could have a 1 in 3 chance of being historically based.

but someone who thinks all historical methodology can be reduced to Bayes's theorem

The Pharyngula Wiki

(http://pharyngula.wikia.com/wiki/Pharyngula_Wiki)

Social Justice and Economics

(http://pharyngula.wikia.com/wiki/Economics/Social_Justice_and_Economics)

If you want to see the case made (for all science, not just history) by someone other than Carrier:

<https://www.amazon.ca/Our-Knowledge-Past-Philosophy-Historiography/dp/0521120772>

(<https://www.amazon.ca/Our-Knowledge-Past-Philosophy-Historiography/dp/0521120772>)

Note that Bayes Theorem basically is just logic applied to data/premises. So it shouldn't be surprising that correct reasoning is just like that.

, and for some years thought he correct theoretical physicists about the relationship between quantum mechanics and relativity.

@11, Holms

KG, I have seen that disagreeing-with-physicists-about-physics thing before, but never managed to find it (as I have simply forgotten). Do you recall where it is?

Seems misleading to say "disagreeing-with-physicists-about-physics", since these are not settled questions with physics. Hence why KG had to say "theoretical physicists". So they are still in the domain of philosophy, which one of Carrier's areas of specialty. And he's also well informed of the confirmed physics of relativity and

(http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/files/201quantum_mechanics.)

PZ Myers

(mailto:pzmyers@gmail.com) is a biologist and associate professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris

(<http://www.morris.umn.edu/>). This is a personal weblog. The opinions expressed here represent my own and not those of my employer.

Here's his paper he made (<http://richardcarrier.blogspot.ca/2011/06/calling-all-physicists.html>) for physicists to check out. He's said he's too busy with other things now to really reply to some of the responses he got, but he'd like to do so in the future.

20.  Rob Grigjanis
2 December 2016 at 12:00 pm (http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal_sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052304)

Holms @11: A couple of Profound Conclusions that Carrier came to after apparently skimming some physics;

- 1) The universe is deterministic because photons follow null geodesics (<http://physics.stackexchange.com/questions/188859/what-is-a-null-geodesic/188865#188865>).
- 2) Spacetime is discrete because there is a minimum resolvable distance/time.

Whether or not the universe is deterministic, or spacetime is discrete (please note, Brian Pansky), both of Carrier's arguments here are utter nonsense.

21.  raven
2 December 2016 at 12:01 pm (http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal_sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052305)

IANAL, but one of the glaring flaws with Carrier's lawsuit is that he lumped a whole lot of people together. Who don't know each other and have nothing in common.

It's a completely arbitrary and random grouping with only one thing in common.
Richard Carrier doesn't like them.

I'm just guessing here, but since this isn't a coherent group of people, the individuals and organizations involved could and should move to have Carrier file individual lawsuits for each defendant.

22.  raven
2 December 2016 at 12:10 pm (http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal_sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052307)

Get it declared a SLAPP suit.
Which it is.
Loser pays court costs and your attorney.

(<http://www.powells.com/biblio/1-978030737934-2>)

• a longer profile of yours truly (<http://www.citypages.com/2005-11-23/news/the-mad-scientist/>)

• my calendar (actually updated!) (<https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=pzmyers%40gmail.com&ctz=America/Chicago>)

• Nature Network (<http://network.nature.com/profile/pzmyers>)

• facebook (http://minnesota.facebook.com/p/PZ_Myers/13937490)

• MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/pharyngula>)

• Twitter (<http://twitter.com/pzmyers>)

• Atheist Nexus (<http://www.atheistnexus.org/profile/PZMyers>)

- the Pharyngula chat room
(<http://wbe001.mibbit.com/?server=irc.synirc.net&channel=%23pharyngula>)
(#pharyngula on irc.synirc.net)
- G+
(<https://plus.google.com/117447138737788378765/>?prsrc=3)

Follow @pzmyers

Donate

I reserve the right to publicly post, with full identifying information about the source, any email sent to me that contains threats of violence.

(<http://atheism.about.com/od/ReadersChoiceAwards/ss/Choice-Awards-2012.htm>)



(<http://outcampaign.org/>)
I support Americans United for Separation of Church and State. (<http://www.au.org>)

RECENT COMMENTS

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(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/an-epistemological-battering/comment-page-1/#comment-1054269>)

gijoel on Aren't you *ashamed* of your job?
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/arent-you-ashamed-of-your>)

1. Carrier is being cosmically dumb.

In the age of Trump, New American Fascists, and the internet, everyone would forget about this tempest and move on and soon. His 15 minutes of notoriety would be over and done with. Or he could have just shown some ability for introspection, made a public apology, and attended classes in how to be a decent human being.

2. If Freethoughtblogs wants to set up a legal defense fund, I'm in for a few bucks. I really don't like bullies and really do value our freedoms such as free speech.

3. Another problem with this lawsuit. Because of the GOP, the federal courts are underfunded. The wait for a hearing in a civil suit depends on jurisdiction. But it is usually around 2 to 4 years minimum and can be as long as 10 years.

When the average attention span is 15 minutes these days, no one is going to know or care about any of this in years.

23.  themadtapper

2 December 2016 at 12:23 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052311>)

@22 They can't get it declared SLAPP in Ohio. That's likely one of the reasons Carrier and his lawyer chose it as the venue. PZ and co.'s lawyer has challenged the venue, so we'll see where that goes. Seems like they've got a solid argument for Ohio being inappropriate venue. Carrier's lawyer's whole argument for Ohio seems to be "Carrier has lived in Ohio for a few months".

24.  Brian Pansky (<http://thread-of-fire.tumblr.com/myblogs>)

2 December 2016 at 12:39 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052316>)

@20, Rob Grigjanis

2) Spacetime is discrete because there is a minimum resolvable distance/time.

You are misrepresenting him. He explicitly said (<http://www.richardcarrier.info/archives/8979#comment-13816>) this is not the reason. The reason has to do with *why* the minimum resolvable distance/time comes about, not the mere fact that there is a minimum resolvable distance/time.

You need to stop this.

I can't evaluate your other claim, but I doubt you have anything worth my time.

25.  Brian Pansky (<http://thread-of-fire.tumblr.com/myblogs>)

2 December 2016 at 12:46 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052322>)

@21, raven

It's a completely arbitrary and random grouping with only one thing in common.

Richard Carrier doesn't like them.

If you don't know what they have in common, then you literally don't know what this legal case is about.

26.  Rob Grigjanis

2 December 2016 at 12:57 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052330>)

Brian Pansky @24: I already addressed that useless deflection here

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/02/26/im-gonna-call-this-nyesplaining/#comment-1004332>) and your response was just petulant blustering.

Seriously, how do you know that Carrier is "well informed of the confirmed physics of relativity and quantum mechanics"? Because he says he is?

27.  Peter Bollwerk

2 December 2016 at 1:07 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052333>)

job/comment-page-1/#comment-1054268
gijoel on Even so-called "moderate"
Republicans are unfeeling reptiles
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/even-so-called-moderate-republicans-are-unfeeling-reptiles/comment-page-1/#comment-1054267>)
gijoel on Even so-called "moderate"
Republicans are unfeeling reptiles
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/even-so-called-moderate-republicans-are-unfeeling-reptiles/comment-page-1/#comment-1054266>)
tardigrada on Even so-called "moderate"
Republicans are unfeeling reptiles
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/13/even-so-called-moderate-republicans-are-unfeeling-reptiles/comment-page-1/#comment-1054265>)
gijoel on I had no idea quantum computing was so kinky
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/i-had-no-idea-quantum-computing-was-so-kinky/comment-page-1/#comment-1054264>)
John Morales on Even us sacrilegious jerks have limits
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/10/even-us-sacrilegious-jerks-have-limits/comment-page-1/#comment-1054263>)
gijoel on Is that in my job description?
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/is-that-in-my-job-description/comment-page-1/#comment-1054262>)
John Morales on Is that in my job description?
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/is-that-in-my-job-description/comment-page-1/#comment-1054261>)
loop on Is that in my job description?
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/14/is-that-in-my-job-description/comment-page-1/#comment-1054260>)
Lynna, OM
(<http://www.artmeetsadventure.com>) on Discuss: Moments of Political Madness
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/11/05/discuss-moments-of-political-madness-6/comment-page-3/#comment-1054259>)

ATHEISM

American Atheists (<http://www.atheists.org>)
American Humanist Association
(<http://www.americanhumanist.org>)
Atheist Alliance International
(<http://www.atheistalliance.org>)
Canadian Atheist
(<http://canadianatheist.com>)
Daylight Atheism
(<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/daylightatheism/>)
Ex-Muslims of North America
(<http://www.exmna.org>)
Free Thinking

I think I'm equally disappointed at the lawsuit as I am with those who seem eager to disparage his work. I have no idea what actually happened, but a \$2m lawsuit seems awfully excessive. But that doesn't change my view that this his work in the field of history is excellent.

28.  raven
2 December 2016 at 1:12 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052335>)

If you don't know what they have in common, then you literally don't know what this legal case is about.

I did some reading months ago.
It didn't make things much clearer.
Richard Carrier is alleged to be something of a sexual aggressor or harasser towards a few (or many) women.
But do feel free to enlighten us. What do they have in common?

29.  raven
2 December 2016 at 1:21 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052336>)

Friendly Atheists:

has filed a lawsuit against multiple atheists, their blogging networks, and an atheist conference on charges of defamation (two counts), interference with his business (one count), and emotional distress (two counts

This doesn't look like a coherent group of closely connected people.

They shouldn't be lumped together in the same lawsuit.

OK Brian. Balls in your court. How are these people connected and why should they be lumped together?

30.  Saad
2 December 2016 at 1:27 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052338>)

Lofty, #6

Maybe he's trying to gain enough asshole cred to land a job with the Orange Trumpeter.

Wrong Carrier.

31.  Siggy (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/atrivialknot>)
2 December 2016 at 1:34 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052343>)

@Brian Pansky

I glanced at Carrier's article on relativity. He appears to make the elementary error of applying the idea of a space-time interval to space (without time). He concludes at any two points in space are adjacent, when in fact this can only apply to two points in space-time which share a light cone. All the stuff Carrier says about objectiv space-time is both ill-defined and unnecessary. In every respect, this resembles the work of a physics crank, ye even down to Carrier's humility about it.

Now, over the years I have seen many attempts to poison Richard Carrier's well by referring to that time he wa wrong about physics. I disagree with this, because a) being wrong about physics is not some horrible crime, b) physics cranks are mostly ordinary people, and c) physics cranks primarily harm themselves. Furthermore, thi particular case appears to have happened years ago, and I don't know that Carrier pursued it any further.

That said, Carrier's ideas about physics are indefensible, and you should stop trying. If you wanted to defend Carrier, you would do better by saying that was a long time ago. I judge Carrier for his more recent actions.

32.  Siggy (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/atrivialknot>)
2 December 2016 at 1:54 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052350>)

(<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/blogs>)
Jesus and Mo (<http://www.jesusandmo.net/>)
Minnesota Atheists (<http://mnatheists.org/>)
Rosa Rubicondior
(<http://rosarubicondior.blogspot.com>)
Sandwalk (<http://sandwalk.blogspot.com>)
SSA (<https://www.secularstudents.org/>)
The Morning Heresy
(<http://www.centerforinquiry.net/blogs/pfidalgo>)

CULTURE

Alas! A blog (<http://www.amptoons.com/blog/>)
Amanda Marcotte
(http://www.salon.com/writer/amanda_marcotte/)
Americans United (<http://au.org/>)
Blue Gal (<http://bgalrstate.blogspot.com>)
Butterflies & Wheels
(<http://www.butterfliesandwheels.org/>)
Charles P. Pierce
(<http://www.esquire.com/blogs/politics/>)
Driftglass (<http://driftglass.blogspot.com>)
Hullabaloo (<http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>)
I Blame the Patriarchy
(<http://blog.iblameonthepatriarchy.com/>)
Joe. My. God. (<http://www.joemygod.com/>)
Lance Mannion
(<http://lancemannion.typepad.com/>)
Making Light
(<http://nielsenhayden.com/makinglight/>)
Rewire (<https://rewire.news/>)
Sadly, No! (<http://www.sadlyno.com/>)
Secular Woman
(<http://www.secularwoman.org/>)
Skeptical Humanities
(<http://skepticalhumanities.com/>)
We Hunted the Mammoth
(<http://wehuntedthemammoth.com/>)
Whatever (<http://whatever.scalzi.com/>)

SCIENCE

Coyot.es Network (<http://coyot.es>)
Coyote Crossing (<http://coyot.es/crossing>)
Discover blogs
(<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/>)
Genomicron
(<http://www.genomicron.evolverzone.com/>)
Judge Starling (Dan Gruen)
(<http://judgestarling.tumblr.com/>)
NCSE (<http://ncse.com/>)
Panda's Thumb
(<http://www.pandasthumb.org/>)
Preposterous Universe
(<http://www.preposterousuniverse.com/blog/>)
Sandwalk (<http://sandwalk.blogspot.com>)
SciAm blogs
(<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/>)
SciCurious
(<https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/scicurious>)
Science after Sunclipse
(<http://www.sunclipse.org/>)

On second glance, I misread Carrier's article on physics. Instead, he appears to argue that both entangled particles in the EPR paradox are connected to a single point in the past via zero-length space-time intervals. I do not think this is very coherent, and it does not change my overall assessment of Carrier's ideas about physics.

33.  Siobhan
2 December 2016 at 1:57 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052351>)
@raven

How are these people connected and why should they be lumped together?

What we all have in common is that we didn't automatically defer to Carrier's side of the story. That's it. Worth mil, apparently.

34.  raven
2 December 2016 at 2:04 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052357>)

Wikipedia

Joiner of parties[edit]

Joiner of parties also falls into two categories: permissive joinder and compulsory joinder.

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure No. 20 addresses permissive joinder. Permissive joinder allows multiple plaintiffs to join in an action if each of their claims arise from the same transaction or occurrence, and if there is a common question of law or fact relating to all plaintiffs' claims. For example, several landowners may join together in suing a factory for environmental runoff onto their property. Permissive joinder is also appropriate to join multiple defendants, as long as the same considerations as for joining multiple plaintiffs are met. This often occurs in lawsuits regarding faulty products; the plaintiff will sue the manufacturer of the final product and the manufacturers of any constituent parts. The court must have personal jurisdiction over every defendant joined in the action.^[2]

Lumping multiple defendants together is calling joinder.

I don't see that there is enough in common to lump blog networks Orbit, Freethoughtblogs, conference Skepticon, and multiple defendants who all acted individually together.

But as I said, IANAL.

Is their a real lawyer in the house?

35.  raven
2 December 2016 at 2:18 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052364>)

Siobhan:

What we all have in common is that we didn't automatically defer to Carrier's side of the story. That's it. Worth 2 mil, apparently.

1. I don't think that is enough to lump all the defendants, Orbit, FTB's, and Skepticon together. Talk to your lawyers and try to get the lawsuits separated.
2. I've been where you are. Many times. Don't panic. Truth is an absolute defense.
I just tell them to shut up, file the papers, and let's go to court.
They never have, perhaps because I live in a strong anti-SLAAP state. Quite often they then just threaten to kill me instead.
I realize in this case, they have filed the papers.

36.  themadtapper
2 December 2016 at 2:24 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052368>)

ScienceBlogs (<http://scienceblogs.com/>)
 Scientopia (<http://scientopia.org/blogs/>)
 Skulls in the Stars
 (<http://skullsinthestars.com/>)
 Tellamed Revisited
 (<http://tellamedrevisited.wordpress.com/>)
 The Well-Timed Period
 (<http://thewelltimedperiod.blogspot.com/>)
 What's in John's Freezer?
 (<http://whatsinjohnsfreezer.com/>)

SKEPTICISM

Skepchick (<http://skepchick.org/>)
 Skeptical Humanities
 (<http://skepticalhumanities.com/>)

TAGS

aliens
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/aliens/>)

anti-asshole

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pl>)
 asshole/ anti-sexism
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/p>)
 sexism/ apophenia
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/apophenia/>)

back in the gutter
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/back-in-the-gutter/>) big guns
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/big-guns/>)
 bloody-mindedness
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/bloody-mindedness/>) blue tongued lizard
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/blue-tongued-lizard/>) Brexit
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/brexit/>)

comic book movies
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/comic-book-movies/>) courage
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/courage/>)

creationism

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula>)
 2/ critiquing feminism
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/critiquing-feminism/>) cuddly
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/cuddly/>) cute
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/cute/>) don't ask me about mine
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/dont-ask-me-about-mine/>) envy
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/envy/>) games
 (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/games/>)

Gender workshop

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/>)

Permissive joinder allows multiple plaintiffs to join in an action if each of their claims arise from the same transaction or occurrence, and if there is a common question of law or fact relating to all plaintiffs' claims.

"

Permissive joinder is also appropriate to join multiple defendants, as long as the same considerations as for joining multiple plaintiffs are met.

I'd imagine the premise is that the same question of law relates (that they all defamed him in violation of the same statutes) and that the claims arise from the same occurrence (that they all defamed him for the same alleged actions). It does not matter that the organizations and people in question are not all intimately connected, nor does the claim require there to have been coordination between them. IANAL either, but that is how I read the situation.

37.



Siobhan

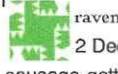
2 December 2016 at 2:46 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052379>)

@raven

I don't think that is enough to lump all the defendants, Orbit, FTB's, and Skepticon together.
 Talk to your lawyers and try to get the lawsuits separated.

Hey, I didn't say it was *good* logic, just that it was Carrier's logic. :P

38.



raven

2 December 2016 at 2:53 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052381>)

I'd imagine the premise is that the same question of law relates (that they all defamed him in violation of the same statutes) and that the claims arise from the **same occurrence** (that they all defamed him for the **same alleged actions**).

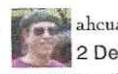
I'm going to disagree here.

All these cases are different in occurrence, actions, and details.
 And that should matter.

At this point, since none of us are lawyers and deeply familiar with the laws and the cases, we might just as well leave it here.

The lawyers involved will know about joinder and have thought of this. Let's see what they do.

39.



ahcuah (<http://ahcuah.wordpress.com/>)

2 December 2016 at 3:25 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052384>)

Here's what the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure say:

Defendants. Persons—as well as a vessel, cargo, or other property subject to admiralty process in rem—may be joined in one action as defendants if:

- (A) any right to relief is asserted against them jointly, severally, or in the alternative with respect to or arising out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences; and
- (B) any question of law or fact common to all defendants will arise in the action.

Weren't all the blog posts related to Carrier's behavior at Skepticon? And it seems to me that the posts could easily be a "series or transactions or occurrences". On top of that, (B) is surely satisfied, and in the interest of judicial economy one court in one suit would be quite appropriate.

But on top of that, Randazza is a really, really good lawyer. If it had made sense to separate the defendants at this time, he would have done it.

Also note that this is a motion to dismiss (in lieu of an Answer). According to Rule 21 (Misjoinder and Nonjoinder of Parties):

Misjoinder of parties is not a ground for dismissing an action.

workshop/) god's weird dicttates

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/gods-weird-dicttates/>) jealousy
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/jealousy/>) just plain viciousness
(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/just-plain-viciousness/>)

language

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/p>) learning stuff

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com>)

stuff/) movies

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/movies/>)

needed more bats

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/needed-more-bats/>) NO

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/no/>) oblivious

to global impact

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/oblivious-to-global-impact/>) outreach

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/outreach/>) paradigm symposium

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/symposium/>) principles

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/principles/>)

Ray Comfort

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/ray-comfort/>) reptile

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/reptile/>) sarcasm

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/slimy> (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/slimy/>))

tea

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/tea/>)

the goddamn batman

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/the-goddamn-batman/>) transfeminism

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/trump/>) Trump

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/trump/>) ufo

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/ufo/>)

Vox Day (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/vox-day/>) with nematocysts

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/with-nematocysts>)

world conquest

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com>)@deepwater

conquest/) Xiaolingia

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/xiaolingia/>) ZOIZ? (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/tag/zoiz/>)

So, even if it made sense, it is still too early in the proceedings to file such a motion.

40.  soul_biscuit

 2 December 2016 at 8:27 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052427>)

Re jointer of defendants:

IAAL, though I don't practice in this area. My understanding is that judges almost never sever cases against multiple defendants because trying them together is more efficient. That the statements alleged to be defamatory concern the same conduct on Carrier's part is probably enough. Though I haven't read the complaint so I don't know exactly what Carrier is alleging.

PZ Myers (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula>)

 2 December 2016 at 10:24 pm

(<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052454>)

1. I agree that Carrier's physics is flaming nonsense.

2. However, I agree with him on the Jesus myth stuff — there is so much contradictory noise in the stories that I can easily believe that Jesus is about as real as King Arthur.

3. We actually do all know each other to varying degrees. Being aware of each other's existence isn't necessarily a good reason to lump us together in a lawsuit.

4. On the matter of whether we should be split into different suits...we will do whatever our lawyer tells us is best, and I'm not going to discuss his strategies (except where there has been a public statement). We are all of us committed to hang together, though, so even if we were split apart, we'd still be mutually supporting each other in this ludicrous suit.

We're taking the whole thing very seriously, but ultimately, I'm confident that we shall prevail.

Of course, I said that about Trump, too.

42.  ahcuah (<http://ahcuah.wordpress.com>)

 2 December 2016 at 10:33 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052457>)

I have placed a copy of Carrier's Complaint (http://www.ahcuah.com/Carrier_Complaint.pdf) on my website.

Having it be a single suit also helps the defendants, in that they don't have to hire separate attorneys, or, with a single attorney, have the same papers filed multiple times for each suit.

43.  deepwater

 3 December 2016 at 2:58 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052509>)

Im a bit confused – the public document posted by PZ which I accessed at <https://archive.is/fVYml> (<https://archive.is/fVYml>) is different to the one currently on the site here?

Which is the correct document?

44.  ahcuah (<http://ahcuah.wordpress.com>)

 3 December 2016 at 8:36 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052515>)

The only difference I noticed was that the document linked by PZ above was 126 pages and the one on archive.is was 170 pages. The extra pages on archive.is are the exhibits to Trey Rothell's Declaration, which are omitted on PZ's above.

45.  KG

 3 December 2016 at 1:41 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052545>)

I judge Carrier's mythicism, and his belief that all historical methodology can be reduced to Bayes's theorem, to be deluded kookery because *the overwhelming majority of relevant experts say so*.

It's very odd that Paul of Tarsus, who supposedly lived not long after Jesus Christ was supposedly crucified wrote nothing that invoked any miracles that Jesus performed (other than the resurrection itself) or teachings that Jesus taught. – Owlmirror@16

Why is it odd? His letters are to groups of Christians about various points of procedure or doctrine on which Jesus would have had nothing to say, because they could only arise once Christianity had begun to spread. The groups had presumably already been told the miracle stories and teachings – or how would they have become Christians? But beyond that, if this was a serious issue, why wouldn't the relevant experts – who include many non-Christians – not have noticed? Are you so much cleverer than all of them?

Note that Bayes Theorem basically is just logic applied to data/premises. So it shouldn't be surprising that correct reasoning is just like that. – Brian Pansky@19

Bayes Theorem is extremely useful in certain areas – for example, medical diagnosis, where you are likely to have extensive data on confirmed cases and non-cases of disease X which tell you how often a particular sign or symptom appears, and hence how useful it is in diagnosing disease X, and it therefore *makes sense* to say there's a 1/3 chance this case is disease X – one time in 3 that you observe this cluster of signs and symptoms, the correct diagnosis is disease X. It's fuck-all use in almost all cases of historical research, where you are reasoning about unique events, and it makes no sense at all to say there's a 1/3 chance Jesus was real. Either he was, or he wasn't. What you need to do in that sort of historical case is construct one or more hypotheses that cover the facts so far (believed to be) known, then deduce what other data could reasonably be expected to be available if each hypothesis is true, and look for it. What the consensus of relevant experts says (and this includes atheists, agnostics and religious Jews as well as Christians) is that Carrier hasn't even got close to a mythicist hypothesis; that accounts for the existing evidence (e.g. the egregious bulshitting he goes in for with regard to Paul referring to James as "the brother of the Lord").

However, I agree with him on the Jesus myth stuff – PZM@41

And your opinion counts for just as much as mine – viz, fuck-all. How is it that *in this particular case* so many atheists who are not experts in the field are eager to abandon the general principle that the consensus of relevant experts – especially when they disagree on many other issues – is very likely to be right?

46.  KG

 3 December 2016 at 1:47 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052548>)

Further to my #45, and in response to PZ's 41, there's also the evidence of Carrier's crankery in the case of physics (everyone except Brian Pansky seems to accept that that is deluded kookery). So we know Carrier is quite capable of spewing egregious garbage in areas he knows fuck-all about. That should at least alert people to the possibility that his mythicism is similarly deluded kookery. And atheists should particularly beware of accepting conclusions that would be emotionally very satisfying – such as that Christians have made complete fools of themselves by worshipping a person *who never even existed*.

47.  EnlightenmentLiberal

 4 December 2016 at 7:09 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052749>)

But beyond that, if this was a serious issue, why wouldn't the relevant experts – who include many non-Christians – not have noticed? Are you so much cleverer than all of them?

Are you familiar with the Thompson affair?

[\(http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/critscho358014.shtml\)](http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/critscho358014.shtml)

In short, the scholar who initially advanced mythicism for the old testament patriarchs received quite less than reasonable and welcome response from the so-called expert community for his work. In short, his career was destroyed, almost no one would hire him, and even 15 (IIRC) years later when he received a job in scholarship, he was being accused of being an anti-semitic, and the university was attacked for hiring such a person.

One should not bow to expert opinion merely because they happen to occupy the position of "expert". Based on several sources, including the Thompson affair, I'm well convinced that the so-called experts of historical biblical studies are not worthy of that title and respect and trust.

PS:

According to a completely random source, who cites another source:

http://lesswrong.com/lw/iuo/trusting_expert_consensus/

(http://lesswrong.com/lw/iuo/trusting_expert_consensus/)

Atheist Biblical scholar Jacques Berlinerblau once estimated that at a typical meeting of a thousand members of the Society for Biblical Literature, you'd find only a couple dozen atheists (I'm not sure if he meant to include people like Bart Ehrman, who identifies as an agnostic).

Concerning your claim that the "relevant experts [...] include many non-Christians"? That seems to be false from a cursory examination. Is my source wrong? On basis do you make your claim?

48.  Owlmirror

5 December 2016 at 5:23 am (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1052808>)

@KG:

It's very odd that Paul of Tarsus, who supposedly lived not long after Jesus Christ was supposedly crucified, wrote nothing that invoked any miracles that Jesus performed (other than the resurrection itself) or teachings that Jesus taught. – Owlmirror@16

Why is it odd? His letters are to groups of Christians about various points of procedure or doctrine on which Jesus would have had nothing to say, because they could only arise once Christianity had begun to spread. These groups had presumably already been told the miracle stories and teachings – or how would they have become Christians?

Wouldn't these putative teachings they had already been told have had some reference to the law; to behaviors that God wanted from people? At the very least, to the directive to love one's neighbor, emphasized in the Gospels with "Love one another", and expounded upon with the parable of the good Samaritan?

Yet if you look at Galatians, for example, Paul never reminds his readers that Jesus taught this too. Looking at Galatians, Paul makes reference to the OT law, including the part about loving one's neighbor, but nothing about what Jesus said about it.

If Jesus had been some putative radical rabbi, wouldn't there have been at least something about what he taught from or about the law that *made* him radical that Paul would have referenced, considering that both he and his readers presumably would have thought of Jesus as being some sort of authority? Even if they both already had these teachings, wouldn't there have been at least some small thing that Paul would have thought worth referencing and emphasizing as being from Jesus' authority?

But there's nothing about Jesus having said or done anything at all.

But beyond that, if this was a serious issue, why wouldn't the relevant experts – who include many non-Christians – not have noticed?

If you can find one or more non-Christian expert who dismantles the mythicist position using something better than special pleading, I'd like to see it.

Note that mythicists don't think that the mythicist arguments are absolutely conclusive. Maybe Paul had some perfectly understandable reason for not referencing anything that Jesus taught or did, for example. Maybe the argument that James was a member of a brotherhood of Christians (rather than being actual kin to a putative real Jesus) is mistaken, as another example.

But mythicism is not claimed to be absolutely conclusive, only a reasonable conclusion given a close analysis of the available evidence.

It's fuck-all use in almost all cases of historical research, where you are reasoning about unique events, and it makes no sense at all to say there's a 1/3 chance Jesus was real. Either he was, or he wasn't.

Ow. Someone throws a 6-sided die, and it falls where you can't see it. That's a unique event that has already happened.

Are you really going to say that it makes no sense to say that there's a 1/6 chance that it came up "6"? It either came up 6 or it didn't?

Bayesian history is basically trying to figure out how many sides the "dice" of historical events have.

What you need to do in that sort of historical case is construct one or more hypotheses that cover the facts so far (believed to be) known, then deduce what other data could reasonably be expected to be available if each hypothesis is true, and look for it.

You have to be careful with this, though — there are Christians who proudly proclaim that they use just those methods to prove that Christianity is true; that Jesus existed and did miracles, and so on.

But then, there are also Christians who do the same thing with Bayesian probability analysis. Any method can be abused.

What the consensus of relevant experts says (and this includes atheists, agnostics and religious Jews as well as Christians) is that Carrier hasn't even got close to a mythicist hypothesis that accounts for the existing evidence (e.g. the egregious bulshitting he goes in for with regard to Paul referring to James as "the brother of the Lord").

Heh. Is it your expert opinion that it's "egregious bullshitting"?

And atheists should particularly beware of accepting conclusions that would be emotionally very satisfying — such as that Christians have made complete fools of themselves by worshipping a person *who never ever existed*.

This is an odd criticism to levy, given that as atheists, we all conclude that all religious people ever worship (or did worship) one or more invisible intangible persons who never even existed.

While I think religious people are wrong, I don't think they "have made complete fools of themselves". And that certainly not the reason I think that mythicism is at least somewhat reasonable.

49.  KG

 14 December 2016 at 2:19 pm (<http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2016/12/02/watching-the-legal-sausage-getting-made/#comment-1054235>)

EnlightenmentLiberal@47,

I suppose it depends what you mean by "many". Among the *prominent* non-Christian scholars of the NT and closely related issues are: Geza Vermes, Hector Avalos, Bart Ehrman, Burton Mack, Robert Eisenman, Gerd Lüdemann, Dennis R. MacDonald (possibly regards himself as a Christian, but if so, on what grounds is unclear), Richard E. Rubenstein, James Tabor, Robert M. Price (the only mythicist in my list). The Thompson affair certainly shows that some university departments are intolerant — but note that Thompson (an OT scholar, of course), like most of the NT scholars I list, has or had a tenured position at a respected university.

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